

even a bomb blast at the Baghdad Hotel just a few blocks away from this now very busy commercial strip has dampened the growing activity. A number of our colleagues have traveled and are continuing to travel to Iraq, and they come back with those encouraging reports that we are just beginning to hear about these days.

Recently, ABC News reported that at one computer and data system company, trade is up 70 percent since sanctions were lifted in May. At the Al Farah used car lot, a 9-year-old Jeep sells for \$1,000 less today than when Saddam was in power. Meanwhile, government workers at a Karada Street match factory have seen their salaries soar fivefold. The manager tells the news agency, "Now my salary is much better . . . I can buy anything I want now."

There is much more. Portable generators are selling at discounted prices. Why? Because electricity has become more reliable. Indeed, washing machine and air-conditioner sales are brisk. In a particularly vivid example of how things have changed since the fall of Saddam, a local ice cream shop that used to serve almost exclusively Saddam's circle is now open to any local resident who comes in for that cold treat.

All of these stories are out there and they all point to the dramatic, remarkable changes that are underway that are associated with tasting freedom for the first time in decades.

One of the freedoms Iraqis have been most enthusiastic to exercise is the freedom to express their views. Pollsters for a new Gallup poll reported last week that Iraqis were pleading to share their opinions, and almost every Iraqi asked to participate in the survey volunteered to do so. Gallup's director of international polling told reporters that once they started talking, the Iraqis "went on and on."

It is not hard to imagine the exhilaration they must feel today, how their hearts must swell with the realization that they, for the first time in decades, are truly free—free from tyranny, free from torture, free from persecution, free to speak their minds and create a government of their own devising, for the people and by the people.

For the first time in a generation, the Iraqi people live free of the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. They have begun to develop democratic institutions of government. They are pursuing economic policies on trade and investment that are more liberal than any other country in the region. The Iraqi people have begun replacing that old Saddam currency with the new, unified dinar. They will have in their wallets a powerful symbol of their liberation, money to save or to spend as they choose, without Saddam's face mocking their hopes.

The Gallup poll I mentioned just a few minutes ago found that, even in Baghdad, the Iraqis want us to stay that course. That is because the Iraqis

now have an opportunity, as do we, to change the course of history and bring peace and stability to the heart of the Middle East.

For the sake of Iraq, for the sake of America, we must continue to fight for freedom. Our Declaration of Independence tells us that all men are created equal. Now, in Iraq, we have the opportunity to once again realize that essential truth.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for morning business until the hour of 10 a.m. with the time equally divided between the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON, or her designee, and the Democratic leader or his designee.

Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from Ohio.

ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRANDEN F. OBERLEITNER

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, this past May, I came to the Senate Floor to commemorate the 58th Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. I had been asked by the surviving members of an Army Company—Company K of the 409th Regiment of the 103rd Infantry Division—to fly a flag over our U.S. Capitol building in honor of those in the company who died on the field of battle—those who did not return home—those who Bill Gleason, a Private in K Company, described this way:

Some in our Company were denied the chance to reach old age. They didn't make it to adulthood. They never were old enough to vote in an election. They died then—there in France or Germany. . . . They are frozen in time as they were—forever youthful.

I have again flown flags over our U.S. Capitol and am here today on the Floor of the United States Senate to pay tribute to another soldier—another soldier who did not make it home—another soldier who will remain forever youthful.

Private First Class Branden F. Oberleitner was born on June 18, 1982, in Columbus, OH. He grew up in nearby Worthington, OH, and graduated from Thomas Worthington High School in 2001, just two short years ago. He was a beloved member of his class.

As a kid growing up, many of his friends and family described Branden as "ornery"—as an independent kid who liked to do things his own way. He didn't feel a need to "follow the crowd." He enjoyed looking for crabs with his friends and taking trips to Kentucky to explore in some of the local caves.

Branden valued friendship. Once you were Branden's friend, you were always his friend.

He was loyal.

Branden had an innate ability to fix things. He could intuitively find solutions to problems. Branden was a gifted mechanic and loved to work on cars—especially the 1988 Delta Oldsmobile that seemed to occupy a permanent place in the family driveway. Branden's friend and classmate, Tyler Louk, remembers him elbow-deep in grease working on that car night after night after night.

Branden dreamed of opening a bike shop someday with one of his friends. They were going to fix Harley's.

During high school, Branden started taking firefighting classes at the Delaware Area Career Center. He met a man there named Keith Luce, a retired firefighter and now a firefighter and EMT trainer, who had been an airborne trooper in Vietnam. Keith became an important role model, mentor, and trusted friend. The two developed a tight bond. They had a great deal in common and just seemed to speak the same language. Branden looked up to Keith—he respected him.

With Keith's support and encouragement, Branden thrived in his firefighter training courses. He took to it. He was adept at it. He had found something that really interested him and something that he was good at and enjoyed—something he could make a career out of when he was finished with high school.

Branden's life was taking on whole new dimensions. He was becoming a grounded, disciplined young man, who learned to take time to think things through.

He became focused and developed a sense of responsibility for himself and an appreciation for the needs of others. He wanted to make something of his life—he wanted to help others—he wanted to be of service to others.

The tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought further clarity to Branden's life and his plans for the future. Angered by the vicious attacks and compelled to protect others from future terrorist strikes, Branden enlisted in the United States Army. He joined B Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Assault Division, based out of Fort Campbell, KY.

The call to arms resonated with Branden. "That's all he wanted to do," said friend Kevin Earhart, who worked with Branden at a local gas station before he enlisted. Military service became his passion. He was a good soldier—regimented and resolute. He quickly earned the respect of his unit. Known as "Obie," Branden served as an infantryman and back-up medic, where he was regarded as being both tactically and technically proficient. All in his unit endorsed his application for Officer Candidate School. His Captain, William Riley, described him as "a shining example of what a soldier

should be." Family friend, William Owen described him as "a model soldier—a soldier others could count on, turn to, and laugh with."

This model soldier lost his life on June 5, 2003, when a rifle-propelled grenade hit his Humvee near the Sunni city of Fallujah, about 30 miles west of Baghdad. Branden and the rest of his Division were working to ensure the safety of U.S. peacekeeping forces on the ground in Iraq.

He was 20 years old.

As William Owen said at Branden's memorial service, "He has a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and the appreciation of all of us because he showed that Americans are not selfish, but selfless."

Branden Oberleitner was indeed selfless.

He defines honor.

He defines bravery.

He defines love of country.

As his father, Freeman Carmack said:

It was my honor to have watched him grow into the man he became: A loving brother, son, and proud member of the 101st Airborne Assault.

Branden Oberleitner grabbed a lot out of life in an all too short amount of time.

He lived life well. He it lived deeply. He lived it fully.

My thoughts and prayers remain with Branden's family—his mother, with whom he was especially close, Iris Oberleitner; his father Freeman; brothers Lawrence and Andrew; sister Grace; grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Frank Carmack; and grandmother Dora Fassler.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, are we now moving, under a previous order, to the Foreign Operations bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2800, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2800) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and

related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1965

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a substitute amendment at the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for himself and Mr. LEAHY, proposes an amendment numbered 1965.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to and considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment; further, that no points of order be waived by this agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1965) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, my friend from Vermont and I come to floor today hoping we can dispose of the Foreign Operations bill in short order. That short order will not be today, but we believe we will have a limited number of amendments and, hopefully, an opportunity to wrap this bill up within a day or so—Monday or Tuesday.

Our respective staffs have been burning the midnight oil reviewing the amendments that we are aware of, and I strongly encourage all Senators to offer their amendments on Monday so we can wrap this bill up as quickly as possible.

Let me just say a very few words about the measure before us.

While the Senate's allocation is \$796 million below the President's request, it is also \$970 million above the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, our conference allocation will be closer to the House level, which will make conferring the bill that much more of a challenge.

This measure provides nearly \$1.4 billion for the President's new HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria initiative for those programs under the subcommittee's jurisdiction, which is \$10 million above that request.

Up to \$250 million is available for a contribution to the global fund, and \$150 million is provided for the President's International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative. This amount includes \$700 million for the Global AIDS Initiative.

It provides \$1 billion for the Millennium Challenge assistance, which is \$300 million below the request, and \$100 million for the famine fund.

The bill fully funds the request for numerous accounts, including international disaster assistance; transition initiatives; international narcotics control and law enforcement; migration and refugee assistance; non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, demining

and related programs; international military education and training; and international organizations and programs.

The bill provides increased funding for the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund, development assistance, assistance for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, and assistance for the independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Given the \$796 million cut we had to make, this bill is below the request in the Economic Support Fund, Andean Counterdrug Initiative, Peace Corps, debt restructuring, foreign military financing, peacekeeping operations, and international financial institution accounts—all of those below the request. Most of those accounts are still funded, however, at or above their respective fiscal year 2003 levels.

Despite the cuts in the ESF and FMF accounts, full funding for Israel, Egypt, and Jordan is provided.

Let me say a word or two about the ACI and the Peace Corps. While ACI is funded at \$660 million, we provide authority to transfer \$37 million from the international narcotics account, resulting in a funding level that is equal to last year's. For the Peace Corps, we provide \$310 million and authority to transfer \$20 million from the Global AIDS Initiative to the Peace Corps for their HIV/AIDS activities abroad. This results in a funding level that is \$29 million below the request.

Let me close by thanking my good friend from Vermont for his input to this bill. I know he does not agree with everything in it. Frankly, I don't either. But we have worked hard to craft a bill born of compromise. I thank him for the cooperation and courtesy he continues to extend as the ranking member of this subcommittee.

With that, Mr. President, once again let me say we hope to pass this bill very shortly after Monday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank my good friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, for his comments. I agree with him; I hope if people have amendments they will let us know right away. We will, of course, have the usual managers' package.

Like most appropriations bills, this is a work of compromise. My friend from Kentucky and I have worked together for many years. Sometimes he is the chairman, and sometimes I am. We find common ground and we write bipartisan bills, which is the tradition of the Appropriations Committee.

I thank Chairman MCCONNELL and his staff for working so cooperatively with me and my staff on this bill, and I urge all Members to support it.

I also thank Chairman STEVENS and Senator BYRD for the allocation that was given to us. While it falls short of the President's budget request, I know they did well by us under the circumstances.

Since the Senator from Kentucky has done a good job in summarizing the